

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, July 16, 1786, from  
Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence,  
Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt,  
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson**

New York July 16th.1786

Dear Sir

I have not heard from you for several months past, the last being dated sometime previous to your removal to London. Not knowing you would have staid so long I have wrote you by every packet to France. We have now present 12 States & hope this will be the case for some time. Soon after my arrival here in the winter I suggested to you my apprehensions that the condition of the act of cession from Virga. which respected the extent of the States to be erected over the ceded territory was an impolitick one & that it might be proper to recommend it to the State to alter it. A proposition of this effect was submitted to Congress which ultimately pass'd advising that it be vested in Congress to divide the said territory into not less than 3 nor more than 5 States. But the investigation of this subject has open'd the eyes of a part of the union so as to enable them to view the subject in a different light from what they have heretofore done. They have therefore manifested a desire to rescind every thing they have heretofore done in it, particularly to increase the number of Inhabi

tants which should entitle such States to admission into confederacy, and to make it depend on their having one 13th part of the free inhabitants of the U.S. This with some other restrictions they wish to impose on them evinces plainly the policy of these men to be to keep them out of the confederacy altogether. I consider this as a dangerous & very

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mischievous kind of *policy & calculated to throw them into the hands of Britain*. I know not with certainty whether they will be able to carry this point but if it is press'd & a probability of being carried we shall object to the power of the U.S. to determine the numbers without the consent of the State. It having been left open in the act, does by no means put it in the powr of the U.S. to make such restrictions on this head as to defeat the condition altogether. If they do not therefore agree with the delegation to leave it upon the ground of April 23d 1784 we shall propose a subsequent convention between the parties as to that point, & deny the right of the U. S. to act otherwise in it. In my last I advis'd you of an *intrigue* on foot under *the mangement of Jay to occlude the Missisipi supported by the delegation of Massachusetts*. Since my last no further measures have been open taken in the business, yet it is not relinquish'd. As yet there hath not been a fair tryal of the sense of Congress on the subject. I have a conviction in my own mind that *Jay* has manag'd *this negociation dishonestly*. On the other hand I am persuaded that *the minister here* has no *power* on the subject, yet I am firmly persuaded that he has conducted himself in such manner in this business as to give him and *his court hopes* which *the sense of Congress nor his instructions authorise*. Having been on all

foreign business lately, indeed since you left us, I have had an opportunity of knowing *him* well, & this communication is founded in circumstances this opportunity hath given me. The *Massachusetts delegates* except *the president* whose talents & merits have been greatly overrated (tho preferable greatly in the latter instance to his brethren) are without exception *the most illiberal* I have ever seen from *that state*. Two of these *men* whose names are *Dane and King* are elected for the next year which is my motive for making known to you this circumstance. It may be possibly be of some service to you, as I shall leave Congress, to possess information of this kind. The former is I believe *honest* but *the principles* of the latter I doubt. It has been propos'd and supported by our State to have a Colonial government establish'd over the western districts and to cease at the time they shall be admitted into the confederacy; we are fully persuaded it will be beneficial to the settlers and to the U.S. & especially those to whose frontiers such establishment

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form'd an immediate barrier. This hath not been decided on, & hath only been postpon'd in consequence of the inordinate schemes of some men above alluded to as to the whole policy of the affairs of that country. I am not aware of any thing else that I can give you new. In October I shall leave this for Virga. and shall settle in Fredericksburg for the purpose of commencing the practice of the law. I hope by this you have reachd Paris again & at home, that you have been well pleasd with your trip. Mr. Madison writes me today he is at Phila.& intends in a few days a visit here. I am Dear Sir yr. affectionate friend & servant, Jas. Monroe

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress). Words in italics were written in cipher by Monroe.